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## **The Funerary Ritual in Maramures – A Hermeneutic Perspective**

### **Abstract**

The decoding of ethnographic documents, as a specific means for the analysis and understanding of traditional culture, can be done through hermeneutics, if we define it as being a quest for the meaning, or the signification that a certain idea or religious phenomenon has had along centuries.

In today's funerary ritual we cannot speak about gestures that are afore-thought, we might even notice a certain stereotypy in these gestures. Still, some ritualistic gestures have a very strong and self-evident symbolic efficiency.

The myth of the Great Journey represents a metaphor for the supreme initiation, within the funerary ritual, as it is considered to be the most important symbol from among the beliefs that try to illustrate the access to the world of the dead, and the secret that death keeps so well hidden.

In this study I have tried to decipher the sequences of the funerary ceremonial that can be met with even in our days in some villages in the Maramures County, from a hermeneutical perspective. Thus, I have analyzed the cleaning of the dead, the magic-ritualistic inventory, the give-away ritual, and the mourning songs.

All sequences, all gestures that are present at the funeral are in a close connection with the topography of the World on the Other Side. Their symbolical efficiency is linked with the wish that the soul may reach its final destination; it is also linked with the intention of protecting the community on the case of a misfortunate remaining of the soul of the dead among the living.

In conclusion, we might say that this entire behaviour is meant to obtain a re-establishing of the equilibrium and order within the community.